DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 963 PS 012 472

AUTHOR Norton, Marcia M.; Abramowitz, Sheila E.
TITLE Assessing the Needs and Problems of Early Childhood Administrators/Directors.
PUB DATE [81]
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; *Administrator Qualifications; *Administrators; *Day Care; Early Childhood Education; Educational Needs; Inservice Education; Measures (Individuals); *Nursery Schools; *Professional Development; State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *New York

ABSTRACT

In order to determine the prior training, preparation level, and current needs of preschool and day care program administrators and directors, a survey was sent to all schools registered in the State of New York. Some survey questions assessed administrators general background -- age, years and levels of teaching and administrative experience, prior positions held, and so on. Others focused on the specific problems faced by administrators and directors in their day-to-day operations. Findings indicate a need for more courses, seminars, and workshops in early childhood administration. Of those responding, 56 per cent had no courses or workshops in early childhood administration; of the 44 per cent who had taken administration courses, 60 per cent took the courses after assuming an administrative role. Thus, the development of formal early childhood administration courses and implementation at locations accessible to currently employed administrators and directors appears advised. Detailed findings are presented, and a sample survey instrument is provided. (Author/RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED208963

ASSESSING THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD ADMINISTRATORS/DIRECTORS

by Marcia M. Norton, EdD.
Sheila E. Abramowitz, M.S., C.A.S.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sheila E. Abramowitz
Marcia M. Norton
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

DID YOU KNOW?

1980 Nationwide Statistics state:

--51% of adult American women work outside the home.

--5.5 million working mothers have preschool children.

--One (1) out of every (2) two school-aged children has a mother in the work force.

--43% of married mothers with children under 6 work outside the home.

1985 Projections - U.S. Women's Bureau state:

--6.4 million mothers aged 20-44 with children under 5 will be in the labor force.

1990 Projections - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics state:

--8.6 million mothers with children under 6 will work on a regular basis.

--One (1) in three (3) mothers will be at home caring for their children.

--Two (2) out of three (3) mothers with children under 6 will be in the work force.

PS012472

One of our major national priorities will have to be the ability to provide quality pre-school and day-care programs for our nation's young children as the future need for these services increases. The quality of these programs is directly related to the preparation and training of the individual who administers or directs such schools and centers.

In order to determine the training, preparation and needs of these administrators/directors, a recent study was conducted by Dr. Marcia M. Norton and Sheila E. Abramowitz at the State University at New Paltz, New York which addressed these issues. The New York State Education Department provided a list of all State Registered schools. The survey, Assessing the Needs and Problems of Early Childhood Administrators/Directors was sent to all of those listed schools. Of the 275 questionnaires distributed, 90 were returned.

Questions on the survey asked for general background information such as age range; years and levels of teaching and administrative experience; and position held prior to becoming an Early Childhood Administrator/Director. Educational background data included such areas as:

-The College/University where undergraduate degree was earned.

-The number of undergraduate courses taken in Early Childhood education.

-The number of graduate Early Childhood credits taken.

-Did the individual earn a Masters Degree in Early Childhood or were they presently involved in a graduate degree program leading to a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education?

-Had any courses been taken in Administration/Early Childhood Administration, and if so, where?

-If any courses in Administration were indicated, were they taken <u>before</u> or <u>after</u> assuming present administrative position?

The major thrust of the study focused on the specific problems faced by Early Childhood Administrators/Directors in their day-to-day operations. These included a variety of problems. Those mentioned several times by respondents are listed below in their order of importance and frequency mentioned.

-Encouraging professional growth.

-Insufficient time for staff supervision, evaluation and development. (In many cases being both a teacher/director limited the time available for observing and evaluating staff.)

-Teacher-burn-out (helping to motivate staff).

-Helping teachers plan quality programs (curriculum development).

-Building better relationships and programs with and for parents.

-Maintaining parent involvement as the role of women change (the working mother).

-Low priority given to quality programs for young children by our country's administration

-Low salaries and increasing expenses.

-Limited budgets hinder funding for staff development.

-High costs of college courses and limited salaries hamper motivation towards professional growth.

-Scheduling and planning successful staff meetings.

-Limited time for training new staff members as well as maintaining on-going training of regular staff.

-Improving curriculum.

-Lack of communication network for sharing and supporting other administrators in similar settings.

-The ability to retain one's own enthusiasm as an administrator in order to remain a vital resource to staff.

-Record-keeping (children's records).

-Parent/teacher conference techniques and skills.

-Successfully delegating responsibilities to staff.

-Learning how to use positive criticism with success.

-Budgeting.

-Need for educating school boards and the community on the importance of quality pre-school programs.

-Parental pressure to teach three and four year olds to read in formal programs.

-Interviewing techniques (especially in hiring new staff).

-Proper training of Early Childhood staff now dealing with infant and toddler programs.

-Establishing and maintaining school policies, forms, and brochures.

The implications of this study are far-reaching. There appears to be a definite need for more courses, seminars, and workshops in Early Childhood Administration as indicated by the number and diversity of the problems cited in this study, and by the fact that 56% of those who responded had NO courses or workshops in Early Childhood Administration.

It appears from the study, that one basic need involves developing formal Early Childhood Administration courses.

These should be offered in key geographic areas accessible to these schools/centers. Of the 44% who responded to taking some course work in administration, 60% of those people took those courses AFTER becoming an administrator/director. This indicated their awareness of their need for more formal courses to assist them in this area after assuming their present positions.

This then, leads to another need for Administrative Development through not only courses, but also informal workshops and seminars, held at off-campus sites close to home and school.

The study revealed the following specific course needs listed by importance and frequency of response:

-Staff development and supervision.
-Techniques for evaluating staff and hiring new staff.
-Increasing parent/teacher/administrator relationships.
-Planning successful staff meetings and parent/teacher conferences.
-Curriculum development-planning quality programs.
-Classroom management.
-Budgeting.
-Finance and Laws involved in early childhood programming.
-Resources for helping children with special needs

(including children with learning disabilities and gifted children).

-Developing Toddler Programs and proper staff training.

-Grant-writing.

-Keeping abreast of new trends and developments in legislation having to do with early childhood.

-Observing, recording and evaluating your children's behavior (anecdotal record writing skills).

-Communicating with parents and staff effectively.

As the need for pre-school and day-care programs expands and the demand for accountability proliferates, the findings of this study have demonstrated the need for comprehensive administrative training in order to insure quality Early Childhood programming in the next decade.

Marcia M. Norton, EdD.
Associate Professor
Department of Educational Administration, State University
New Paltz, New York
Educational Consultant in Administration

Sheila E. Abramowitz, M.S.
Certificate of Advanced Study
Educational Administration
State University, New Paltz, N.Y.
Director, Jewish Community Center Nursery School
Spring Valley, New York

STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

RESULTS OF SURVEY OF 275 DIRECTORS OF NEW YORK STATE ACCREDITED NURSERY SCHOOLS.

This survey was sent to 275 New York State registered Nursery Schools.

75 schools returned survey

14 schools - no longer in operation

-2 in Westchester County

-4 in New York City

-5 in Long Island

-3 in Upstate New York

1 school returned form after survey was completed.

Survey shows the following colleges offered respondees an M.S. in Early Childhood Education (or where individual is presently involved in this degree program).

1. Teachers College Columbia, New York City
2. Bank Street College, New York City
3. Antioch College, Ohio
4. New Paltz, State University New York
5. Adelphi University
6. Buffalo, State University New York (offers a great deal in Early Childhood Education to local residents).
7. Brooklyn College, New York City

8. Hofstra, Long Island
9. Western Reserve University
10. Queens College, New York City
11. New York University, New York City
12. Lehman College, New York City
13. Cornell University, New York
14. Sarah Lawrence College, New York
15. City College of New York, New York City

Colleges Offering Courses in Educational Administration

(from respondees in this survey)

1. Bank Street College (courses specifically in Early Childhood Educational Administration)
2. Lehman College
3. Cornell University
4. New Paltz, State University New York
5. Hofstra
6. State University Teachers College, Plattsburgh
7. Pace University

Organizations offering Early Childhood Education workshops and seminars in Administration

1. Board of Jewish Education - Early Childhood Association (BJE)
2. Rockland Council for Young Children (RCYC)
3. Westchester Association for Education of Young Children (WAEYC)

4. Nassau/Suffolk Early Childhood Educational Council

Age range of Early Childhood Directors/Administrators responding to survey:

Age 25-35	18%	(13 people out of 75 people that responded)
Age 35-45	29%	(22 people out of 75 people that responded)
Age 45 & over	53%	(40 people out of 75 people that responded)

Years of Teaching Experience of 75 people responding

0-5 years	21%	(15 people out of 75)
5-10 years	26%	(20 people out of 75)
10 years & over	53%	(40 people out of 75)

In addition to Early Childhood experience

Ages of Children taught at other levels by people responding

Pre-school Age	78%	(59 of the 75 people)
Elementary Grades	12%	(9 of the 75 people)
Junior High School or higher	10%	(7 of the 75 people)

Percent of Males responding to survey - 4% (3 males)

Percent of Females responding to survey - 96% (72 females)

Number of years in present position

0-5 years	53%	(40 people out of 75)
5-10 years	22%	(16 people out of 75)
10 years & over	25%	(17 people out of 75)

Percent of people that are Directors (only) 57% (42 people)

Percent of people that are Teacher/Directors 43% (33 people)

Position held prior to becoming an Early Childhood Administrator

78% of the people responding were head teachers in an early childhood setting or teacher/directors prior to their becoming an Early Childhood Administrator (59 of the 75 people responding).

22% assumed their present position from other fields such as:

a) mental health team aide

b) first grade teacher

c) kindergarten teacher

d) in advertising field

e) mother and housewife

*f) college student and then became Teacher/Director

*g) therapist - emotionally disturbed children

h) substitute teacher for one year (than administrator)

i) Registered nurse

j) Elementary teacher - grades 3,4,5

*male

Length of time in prior position before becoming Early Childhood Administrator

0-5 years	64%	(48 out of 75 responding)
5-10 years	33%	(25 out of 75 responding)
over 10 years	13%	(2 out of 75 responding)

Did person work in same agency prior to becoming Director in that agency.

Yes 44% (33 people out of 75)

No 56% (42 people out of 75)

Educational Background Directors with:

-No College Degree 0%

-B.A. degree in Elementary/Early Childhood - 100%

-M.S. (M.A. degree) Elementary or Early Childhood - 49%

-No Masters degree - (30 out of 75 people) 40%

(and not currently in a program)

-Presently in a Masters program - (8 people) 11%

Percent of people with background in Administration

No administration courses, workshops or degree -

56% (42 out of 75 people)

Individuals who have taken formal university programming in administration -

19% (14 out of 75 people)

Taken some informal workshops or courses in administration -

25% (19 out of 75 people)

Those who responded to taking some course work in administration

(33 people out of 75)

40% took these courses BEFORE becoming a Director

60% took these courses AFTER becoming an Administrator/Director

How have administration courses (if taken) helped you to become a better administrator?

RESPONSES

1. Helped improve counseling skills and observation skills.
2. Provided a broader knowledge of Day Care functions.
3. Helped in areas of staff development
   parent/teacher conferences
   supervision skills
4. Provided the opportunity to communicate with other Early Childhood Directors sharing similar problems.
5. Sharpened techniques of self-evaluation.
6. Helped clarify objectives of supervision.
7. Clarified role of the administrator.
8. Clarified management theory and principles.
9. Courses made for more "awareness".
10. Increased skills when dealing with parents.

How do you provide for Staff development?

-Roleplaying at staff meetings
-*Weekly staff meetings
-Individual teacher meetings
-Monthly staff meetings for entire staff
-Discussion and presentations of new materials
-Using staff talent to help other staff members
-*In/service teacher-training workshops

*items mentioned frequently by respondents

-Providing staff with sources for professional reading material.

-*Visits to other schools

-Encourage staff to attend professional conferences in field.

-Staff required to take at least one Early Childhood course which is paid for by school.

-All head teachers serve as assistant teachers first.

-*Inviting outside leaders to speak at staff meetings.

-*Encourage staff to take courses.

-*Our school requires staff workshops and one Saturday seminar.

-Provide staff with many written materials pertinent to their individual or group needs.

-Classroom observation and follow-up.

-Make staff aware of available professional growth workshops given in area.

-Our staff involves themselves in local Early Childhood organizations (ECEC & WAEYC).

-Encourage joining professional organizations.

-I require membership in AEYC (Slingerland, New York).

-Staff required to take Nassau/Suffolk ECEC in service courses.

<u>How do you involve staff in making decisions?</u>

-*Presenting issues and getting opinions and suggestions

-*Staff discussions

-*Getting opinions from staff

-*Getting as much imput from staff as possible.

-Sharing staff ideas at staff meetings weekly.

-Staff is involved in planning programs

-Joint problem-solving or 1 to 1 problem solving

-By getting feedback but most decisions come from Director

-By working as a "team" - staff involved in most decisions

-Staff ideas are involved in solutions to problems

-We meet and present problems

-Through discussions

-Sharing problems and decision-making

-At weekly staff meetings we voice opinions and make decisions

-*Involving staff on most occasions, in decision making

-2 staff members have a vote on our Board of Trustees

-Staff is involved in all decisions

-*I ask staff for their advice

-*My staff is very much involved in decision making

-*Discussions

Problems Early Childhood Administrators are now faced with

-*Low salaries and increasing expenses

-*Lack of funds while maintaining quality programs

-*Staff morale

-*Being both a teacher/director limits time for observing and evaluating staff.

-*Low priority given to young children in this country

-*Pressure from parents to teach 3's and 4's to read in a structured non-experiential way.

-*Encouraging professional growth

-Hiring new staff

-Changing needs of parents (working mothers) thus the decline of the "co-op" nursery.

-Large demand for expansion of 3 year old programs

-Keeping up with paper-work

-Need for more student teachers

-Parent/staff conflict in the "co-op" nursery setting

-Lack of parent interest and participation

-*Low status given to Early Childhood educators

-The future of quality Day Care programs

-State Day Care changes - a threat to Early Childhood Education

-*Budget increasing - inadequate funds

-*Insufficient time for staff supervision and development

-Difficult parents

-"After working with same staff for 9 years I can't seem to spark staff any longer. They now consider themselves experts without me."

*Curriculum planning

-Overqualified staff - grossly underpaid

-Problems with inefficient custodial staff

-NO PROBLEMS

-Carefully evaluating children with problems without alarming parents unnecessarily.

-I am younger than my staff and encounter conflicts, tensions, problems and resentments. We thus make decisions through a "team approach".

-Communicating with large groups of parents

-*Evaluating staff

-*Educating a School Board on importance of Nursery School

-*Difficulty scheduling faculty meetings for an entire staff since some are part time staff

-Training new and part time staff and less time allowed for on-going training of regular staff

-Planning and team-work

-*Helping teachers plan programs

-*Limited budget for more staff development

-High cost of education prevents me from obtaining M.S. degree

-*Improving curriculum

-Establishing policies, forms and brochures

-*Increasing staff motivation

-Supervising NEW staff

-Presenting programs for working parents

-*Declining enrollments

-*Feelings of "loneliness" in my director's role - would welcome talking to other administrators.

-*Record keeping of children and Parent/Teacher conferences

-Learning to criticize positively - constructive criticism

-Parent Education

-Interviewing techniques when hiring new staff

-Building better Parent/Director relationships

-*Increasing parent involvement and participation

-Designating responsibilities to staff

-*Low salaries for teachers in Early Childhood field although their educational background is equal to all teachers.

-*Maintaining my enthusiasm so that I remain a vital resource to my staff.

Specific courses Early Childhood Administrators wish to have offered to them

There was an overwhelming demand for

*evening workshops

*mini-week-end seminars

as a means of course presentation at off-campus sites (local colleges or nursery school settings, close to home and school)

Courses Requested	Location
**Staff Development -	Purchase (SUNY)
Evaluating staff	Buffalo, Queens, New York
Hiring new staff	City, Long Island
	Westchester County
New trends in Education	Yonkers, Manhattan
(Early Childhood)	Douglaston
	Rockville Center, New York

Courses Requested	Location
*Parent/Teacher Relationships	New York City
Working with Parents	Highland Falls
	Rochester
*Budgeting	Buffalo, Rochester
	New York City
	Long Island
Resources for helping problem children	Rhinebeck, New York
*Planning worthwhile staff meetings	
*Nursery School Curriculum	Elmira, New York
Development	New Paltz, Rockland
Planning Successful Programs	Long Island, Glen Cove
	New York City, Lower
	Westchester, Kingston
	University of Buffalo area
	Schenectady, Plainview
Developing Toddler Programs	
Dealing with the Gifted Pre-Schooler	Plainview
Dealing with the Immature Child	Rochester, Rockland
The Young Administrator with the	Highland Falls
Older Staff - problems and how	Rochester
to solve them	
The successful Parent/Teacher Conference	

Courses Requested	Location
Classroom Management	New York City
	Rochester
Grant Writing	
Educational legislation	
Record-Keeping, Observing and	Rochester, Buffalo
Recording and Evaluating	Brooklyn
Children's Behavior	Westchester
Communicating with people	Garden City
(Parents, staff)	Roosevelt, New York
Supervision and Staff Relationships	Roslyn Heights
Finance and Law	

STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

Please answer each question as best you can

- Your Name_____ Your Address_____
- Age range (circle one) 25 to 35 years, 35 to 45, 45 or over
- How many years have you taught?____ At what levels?____(__yrs)____(__yrs)____(__yrs)
- How long have you been in your present position?_____
- Are you a teacher/director? (circle one) Yes No
- Describe position held prior to becoming an Early Childhood Administrator_____

_____

- How long were you in your prior position?_____
- Was that position in the same agency you presently direct?_____

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- What College or University did you earn your undergraduate degree from?_____
- What year did you graduate?_____
- Approximately how many credits were specifically Early Childhood courses?_____
- Have you taken any graduate courses in Early Childhood Education? (circle one)
  Yes No How many?_____
- Have you earned a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education? (circle one) Yes No
- Are you presently enrolled in a Masters program in Early Childhood Education? (circle one)
  Yes No
- How many credits have you earned to date?____When do you expect to graduate?_____
- If you have your graduate degree, in what year did you graduate and from which College or University?_____
- Have you ever taken any courses in Administration/Early Childhood Administration? Please list as best you can if answer to question is yes.

Title of Course	Where Taken
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- If courses in Administration have been taken was it before or after you assumed your present position that these courses were taken? (circle one) Before After
- Have these courses (if taken) helped you become a better Early Childhood Administrator? How?_____

_____

- As an Early Childhood Administrator, how do you provide for staff development?_____

_____

- In making decisions, how do you involve staff?_____

_____

- What problems are you now faced with in your role as an Early Childhood Director/ Administrator? Please be specific.

_____

_____

- What specific seminars, courses or workshops would you like to see offered (e.g. staff development, budgeting, dealings with parents, etc.) Please be as specific as possible so that we may be able to meet your needs.

Topic	Type of Presentation (Mini weekend courses, seminars, workshops)	Where should these be offered? (e.g. off-campus sites, college campus)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please use back of page if there is any additional information you would like to share with us or add to this questionnaire.